

VZCZCXRO1969
PP RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHLS #1186/01 3570550
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 220550Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6572
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LUSAKA 001186

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/19/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [EINV](#) [ECON](#) [EAIR](#) [KHIV](#) [MASS](#) [ZA](#)

SUBJECT: BANDA JUMPS AT TRADE AND INVESTMENT, BALKS AT UN
VOTING

Classified By: Ambassador Donald E. Booth for Reason(s) 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY:

¶1. (C) Summary: In a December 18 meeting, President Rupiah Banda and the Ambassador discussed ways to strengthen bilateral commercial ties to promote economic growth in Zambia, including concluding an Open Skies agreement and either a Bilateral Investment Treaty or Trade and Investment Framework Agreement. President Banda encouraged the Ambassador to prompt a new debate on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). Tourism Minister Namulunga will join Banda over the holidays in South Luangwa National Park where they will discuss ways to expand Zambia's tourism sector, perhaps through building conference centers near game parks, developing seaside resorts on Lake Tanganyika, and establishing domestic airlinks to connect these to Victoria Falls at Livingstone. Banda also expressed his hope that President-elect Obama would include Zambia on the itinerary of his first official trip to Africa. The Ambassador's briefing on Millennium Challenge Account compact negotiations and the intense discussion of Zimbabwe are reported separately. The Ambassador congratulated President Banda again on his election victory and praised the Electoral Commission of Zambia's work to ensure a relatively open process free of substantial irregularities. President Banda agreed with the Ambassador's assessment. End summary.

STRENGTHENING BILATERAL COMMERCIAL TIES

¶2. (SBU) To strengthen bilateral ties and encourage more commerce and investment, the Ambassador recommended Zambia and the United States conclude an Open Skies agreement (as civil aviation experts on both sides agreed earlier in 2008) and seek to cement commercial ties through either a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT), or a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). Banda was surprised Zambia and the United States had not concluded a modern BIT and enthusiastically supported the idea of negotiating one.

UN AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: AGREEABLE DISAGREEMENTS

¶3. (C) The Ambassador expressed disappointment that Zambian and American voting coincidence, especially on issues important to the United States has fallen so dramatically in the last several years. He asked how the United States and Zambia could work together to address this surprising divergence. Taking a pedantic tone, Banda - a former diplomat and Foreign Affairs Minister - suggested that more frequent pre-consultation and communication could help to address such issues. Banda then said that Zambia's membership in SADC, the African Union and COMESA obligate it to follow those groups' commitment to consensus. Banda added that Zambia and the United States can disagree in principle on issues and still respect each others' positions. Banda concluded by suggesting the United States and Zambia "need to stay close" even when disagreeing, and committed to working with the Ambassador to preview the 2009 UN General Assembly and to identify particular areas where the two countries could cooperate and agree.

HIV/AIDS: POUNDING PREVENTION

14. (C) The Ambassador reviewed the progress of President Bush's Emergency Plan (PEPFAR) with Banda, but noted that as long as new infection rates remain high, Zambia will never turn the tide on HIV. Budgets are not infinite, the Ambassador said, at some point the treatment bill will outstrip Zambia's, the Global Fund's and the United States' ability to fund it. Prevention is the key to solving the HIV/AIDS crisis, the Ambassador asserted and in addition to circumcision, mother to child transmission prevention, and condom use, couples testing has proved a most effective prevention method. The Ambassador challenged Banda and his wife to undergo voluntary testing with the Ambassador and his wife. The response was stone cold silence. The Ambassador wrapped up this discussion by soliciting ideas on how to reduce new infections.

GMOS: LET THE DEBATE BEGIN ANEW

15. (C) A discussion of food security provided an opportunity for the Ambassador to raise Zambia's ban on importing Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). Noting that Zambians already consume GMOs in processed food, President Banda conceded there was a lot of quiet support throughout Zambia for buying GMO commodities from abroad. He was distressed that Zambia pays a hefty premium to import GMO-free commodities to feed its people. The President said a new debate was needed but that he could not launch one. Instead, he asked the Ambassador to prompt a new discussion through inter alia, speeches, Op Eds and visiting expert

LUSAKA 00001186 002 OF 002

speakers. (Note: Agriculture Minister officials may be on board with GMO food and commodity imports, but GMO seeds seem to be a red line).

ACOTA

16. (C) Noting Zambia's failure to schedule ACOTA training in 2008 as previously agreed (and provided for in the Defence Ministry's 2009 budget), the Ambassador sought Banda's views on the utility of this program for Zambia and a decision on whether to pursue additional training sessions. Banda was completely unbriefed and unaware of the ACOTA program and seemed annoyed that he did not even know about the successful 2007 ACOTA training. The President said he would follow up with his advisors on December 22.

BIOGRAPHIC NOTES: BANDA'S THIRD CULTURE KIDS

17. (C) President Banda -- a former Ambassador to Washington -- noted that his older sons, who were partially raised and university educated in America (one, Henry, holds an MBA from Thunderbird) are culturally more American than Zambian. The President also noted with pride his four-year old twins (one boy and one girl) by his third (and present) wife. He also took pleasure in noting that Zambia's former UN PermRep and now Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary, Ambassador Tens Kapoma has worked for Banda in Washington when Kapoma was a very junior second secretary. Kapoma, the only other Zambian in the meeting, obviously has a long history with and access to the President, indicating he is the real decisionmaker at Foreign Affairs.

BOOTH